THE

LADY OF THE MANOR,

A

COMIC OPERA:

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

WRITTEN BY DR. KENRICK.

THE SONGS SET TO MUSIC BY MR. HOOK.

DUBLIN.

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PREFACE.

THE outline of the following Opera (written about ten years ago, by way of relaxation from ſeverer ſtudies) was taken from the *Country Laſſes* of Mr. *Charles Johnſon*, particularly the pleaſing and romantic epiſode, borrowed from the *Cuſtom of the Country* of *Beaumont and Fletcher*.

The author, in accommodating his plan to the preſent taſte, was led of courſe, to reject the revolting abſurdity of ſuppoſing the cuſtom in queſtion ſtill to ſubſiſt.

The conſiderable alterations and additions, alſo which he found it expedient to make, both in the plot and dialogue, have ſo much diverſified the whole, that it has been as *truly* as *ill-naturedly* obſerved, "the "piece reſembles a coat, ſtolen a ſecond "time from a thief, ſo metamorphoſed, "that the very taylor, who firſt cut it out, "would not know the handy-work of his "own ſheers."

It is no wonder that, in this age of *originality*, ſo many *truly-original* critics, who never play at *rob-thief* themſelves, ſhould ſufficiently rally him on ſo artful and complete a transformation. He cannot help thinking, however, that theſe *very honeſt* gentlemen are a little unreaſonable in expecting him to do ſuch *great things* merely for

for his *amuſement*, as are done by thoſe who make play-writing their ſerious *occupation*.

If, therefore, this opera hath hitherto met with an approbation * as general as even the beſt of their moſt elaborate productions; the author cannot but impute it to the excellent acting of the theatrical performers and the elegant taſte of the muſical compoſer.

* If it afford any conſolation to the profeſſional dramatiſts, who envy him this approbation, they may reſt ſatisfied, he is by no means diſpoſed even to amuſe himſelf any more the ſame way.

THE

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

Sir Wilful Wildman, -	Mr. Quick.
Young Wildman, his Nephew,	Mr. Vernon.
Sir John Manly, -	Mr. Mattocks.
Farmer Sternold, - -	Mr. Wilson.
Clodden, - - -	Mr. Doyle.

WOMEN.

Lady Lucy, otherwiſe Flora,	Mrs. Mattocks.
Mrs. Townly, otherwiſe Laura,	Miss Brown.
Cicely the Dairy Maid, -	Mrs. Farrel.

THE LADY OF THE MANOR.

ACT I.

SCENE *a fertile Country. A Gentleman's Seat at the top of a Hill, and a Farm-houſe in the Center of the Scene, at the Bottom.*

The Scene riſes, and diſcovers Lady Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly, *dreſſed, like Country Laſſes, accompanied by Sheep-ſhearers, Men and Maidens, dancing and ſinging in Chorus.*

HAPPY Britons! while we ſhear
Our ſilver fleeces once a year,
As rich, tho' not ſo rare,
If that of old
A fleece of gold,
We neither know nor care.

Mrs. *Town.* Stop, ſtop, my dear couſin Flora, ſtop. I am quite weary, and can hoyden it no longer.

Lady *Lucy.* Come, reſt a while on this bank, then; mean time, our good neighbour Clodden, here, will give us the new ſheep-ſhearing ballad again.

Clodden. That I will, fair damſel, and as often as you deſire it, ſo my lungs hold good, and the lads and laſſes will join in the chorus.

Lady *Lucy.* Strike up then.

CLODDEN.

A wond'rous tale, my friends, we're told,
How, from ſome *foreign* ſhore,
To *Greece* of old,
A fleece of gold,
Advent'rous *Jaſon* bore.

Yet murmur not, my honeſt ſwains,
Your *native* flocks to keep;
Not leſs our gains,
Whoſe peaceful plains
Are ſilver'd o'er with ſheep.

More richly doth our pains requite
The harveſt of the fold,
Whoſe fleeces white
Are chang'd at ſight,
By *commerce* into gold.

CHORUS *repeated.* Happy Britons, *&c.*

[*Exeunt Sheep-ſhearers, ſinging and dancing.*

Lady *Lucy.* So, you are heartily tired of your frolick, I ſee——

Mrs. *Town.* Indeed I am, my dear.

[*They come forward.*

Lady *Lucy.* And was this fatiguing amuſement all the pleaſure you promiſed yourſelf from this wild project, of our leaving the manor-houſe, and paſſing in this diſguiſe, under the names of Flora and Laura, for relations of farmer Sternold? I hope you do not intend to romp about with theſe good folks again tomorrow.

Mrs. *Town.* No, child, I was only willing to have another taſte of your rural diverſions before I left the country. And I promiſe you, I am fully ſatisfied of their ruſticity. I wiſh I could prevail on you to accompany me to London.

Lady *Lucy.* What to do there?

Mrs.

Mrs. *Town.* To ſee and converſe with human creatures, my dear; for I cannot look upon the things, that have juſt parted from us, in any other light than as a kind of intermediate beings between men and brutes; they are certainly of an inferior nature to people who live in London.

Lady *Lucy.* And yet, in the metropolis every thing is falſe, frivolous and artificial; while *here* all things appear in the plain and unaffected dreſs of nature.

LADY LUCY.

Simplicity, daughter of *Truth*,
In *Modeſty*'s veſture array'd,
Here breathes the ſond hope of the *youth*,
And whiſpers the wiſh of the *maid*.

There, *Artifice*, ſon of *Deceit*,
In impudent foppery dreſs'd,
With *Innocence* playing the cheat,
Still makes of true paſſion a jeſt.

Mrs. *Town.* And yet, my dear Lucy, people, bred in ſociety, are as preferable to theſe clowns as angels are to mere mortals.——How long do you think to live in this wilderneſs, before you get a huſband, as I did, by accident?

Lady *Lucy.* I ſhould hope never; were I ſo ſoon to loſe him again as you did, by accident.

Mrs. *Town.* Why not, my dear, if, like mine, he were as well loſt as found? The man dropped from the clouds, to pleaſe my papa; and, taking pet at the world, returned back again——to pleaſe me.

Lady *Lucy.* They ſay, indeed, that marriages are made in heaven.

Mrs. *Town.* Yes; but they ſay too, they are ſtrangely broke in coming down.

Lady *Lucy.* In London, perhaps, where the multiplicity of objects puzzles the choice. But, out of the few that drop here in the country, we may ſoon reſolve to catch one; and be aſſured, my dear Townly,

that when the right man comes, I ſhall not let him ſlip through my fingers.

Mrs. *Townly*. Nay, there's not much choice in the whole ſex. A man's but a man, make the moſt of him. Mine, they ſay, was one of the beſt of them, and you ſee I ſurvived his loſs.

Lady *Lucy*. You are too young and giddy, to take any thing to heart.

Mrs. *Town*. True, couſin, I wore the willow only with my weeds, and that not a weeping willow neither.

Lady *Lucy*. You are a wild rake, Townly.

Mrs. *Town*. We widows have a privilege child—— But women are all rakes at heart; ſo, at leaſt the poet ſays: nay, I'll anſwer for it, that with all your ſimplicity, you have your female rakes in the country, as well as we in town.

MRS. TOWNLY.

Delightful is a rural life,
Where peace and plenty reign;
Where faithful every man and wife,
And true each nymph and ſwain.
The plain of plains, the *rural plain*,
Where ſuch pure raptures flow:
But may I ne'er ſee *town* again,
If *ſuch* a *plain* I know.

Believe me, falſe the country clown
As any London beau;
The *ruſtic laſs*, like *Miſs in town*,
Can favours too beſtow.
The town of towns, dear *London town*,
Thy pleaſures, then be mine!
Deceit may dreſs in linen gown,
And *Truth* in diamonds ſhine.

Mrs. *Town*. To be ſerious, my dear Lady Lucy, I cannot conceive how any woman, who has youth, beauty, and fortune at command, as you have, can take delight in wandering, like a wild thing, about the

the woods, in gloomy groves and diſmal ſhades; when ſhe might diſplay her charms to ſo much greater advantage in the glittering circle of the Pantheon, or the brilliant viſtas of Vauxhall.

Lady *Lucy*. And I can as little conceive how any woman of ſenſe or taſte, can be taken with the artificial amuſements of the town, when ſhe might enjoy the pleaſure of breathing the freſh air, and contemplating the beauties of nature, in the country.

Mrs. *Town*. And you do really prefer the pitiful employment of dangling after a flock of ſimple ſheep, to the ſuperlative delight of having a flock of ſimple admirers dangling after you!——As I live, here they are!

Lady *Lucy*. Who? What?

Mrs. *Town*. Men, men, my dear, ſocial beings!—See, they are coming over the ſtile! My heart flutters at the ſight of them; does not yours?

Lady *Lucy*. Strangers, and well dreſſed!

Mrs. *Town*. Two of our London beaus: Sir John Manly and young Wildman!

Lady *Lucy*. My couſin Wildman!

Mrs. *Town*. The ſame my dear. You don't know much of him, it ſeems.

Lady *Lucy*. My uncle has ever kept him at ſuch a diſtance, that I have not ſeen him ſince he was a ſchool-boy: nor do I believe Sir Wilful himſelf would know his nephew, any more than I. He has not ſuffered the young ſpark to come into his preſence, ſince his return from his travels.

Mrs. *Town*. What can have brought them hither? Let us retire behind this thicket; perhaps we may learn their errand. [*They retire behind a thicket.*

Enter Sir John Manly *and Young* Wildman.

Manly. [*Speaking to his Servants without.*] Well, get the carriage round to the farm-houſe, yonder in the bottom. We'll walk acroſs the fields, and meet you. [*To Wild.*] What an unlucky accident! We are not, it ſeems, above a mile or two from the manor-houſe.

Wild.

Wild. It will be impoſſible, however, to get our damage repaired time enough to reach it to-night. But no matter, the news of our diſaſter will get there before us, and, my word for it, when the good Baronet, my uncle, comes to be informed that the coach of a man of faſhion hath broken down, in croſſing the country to pay him a viſit, he'll give us an opportunity of profiting by our misfortune.

Manly. Be it ſo then: I am ever for making a virtue of neceſſity. In the mean time, George, you will have the pleaſure of ſpending the night with your dearly beloved miſtreſs, *Variety:* you ſhall ſleep, for once, on a truſs of clean ſtraw, in a farmer's barn.

Wild. Well, any thing for a change in life. I am ſatisfied, ſo we tread not continually the ſame track of inſipid pleaſures as in London, where our amuſements, like the company at Ranelagh, move round and round for ever in a circle.

WILDMAN.

The *dog* in a wheel, and the *horſe* in a mill,
The *ſquirrel* with bells on his cage,
Thus run the ſame round of *mere drudgery* ſtill,
So *dull* is the taſte of the age!

Manly. Truce with your common-place raillery. Variety, indeed, is the pleaſure of life, but not the comfort of it. I'll hold you a wager, you'll not ſleep ſo ſoundly in a barn, as you would at a bagnio.

Wild. Not the firſt night, perhaps; but cuſtom would inure me to it.

Manly. Right—Habit only makes things eaſy and familiar. This removes every inconvenience, and makes us look even on danger and diſtreſs with indifference.

MANLY.

Luxurious lords, on beds of down,
Thus Care wide-waking keeps;
While, laid on ſtraw, the labouring clown
All night profoundly ſleeps.

Nay

Nay, blythe, the ſea-boy reefs the ſail,
While howling tempeſts blow,
And laughs to ſcorn, amidſt the gale,
His wat'ry grave below.

Wild. This is pretty moralizing, Manly. But, come, now we are ſo near our journey's end, let us rightly underſtand each other.

Manly. By all means.

Wild. You agree, then, that if, in conſequence of this viſit to my whimſical uncle, you ſhould approve of his niece, get into her good graces, and marry her, you will advance me a moiety of that lady's portion, to be repaid on the death of Sir Wilful, ſhould he die inteſtate; and, in caſe of a will, partial either to nephew or niece, that we ſhare his fortune equally between us.

Manly. Exactly.

Wild. On the other hand, if you ſhould diſlike, or decline to pay your addreſſes to the lady——

Manly. Never fear, George: as I have determined to take up and look out for a wife, ſhe will be certainly my choice. I was ſtruck when I had a ſight of her once, at Litchfield races, and have heard ſuch encomiums on her wit, beauty and underſtanding, ſince, that I am half in love with her already: ſo let us get what accommodation we can to-night, and to-morrow proceed to buſineſs. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Lady Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly, *from behind the thicket.*

Lady *Lucy.* So, ſo, theſe are your people bred in ſociety; theſe are your mortal angels!

Mrs. *Town.* Well, really, they are pretty fellows.

Lady *Lucy.* Yes, and prettily have they taken upon them to diſpoſe of this proper perſon of mine, without once aſking leave of the right owner.

Mrs. *Town.* Nay, child, there's nothing in that. People muſt have ſome way of coming together: and if your couſin helps you to a good huſband, I think you are greatly obliged to him.

Lady

Lady *Lucy*. And I am greatly obliged to him, for helping himſelf to half my fortune too, am I?

Mrs. *Town*. That, indeed, is a piece of impertinence.

Lady *Lucy*. For which, if I don't make them do ſuch penance—But, hold; they return this way.

Mrs. *Town*. Surely they won't know me in this diſguiſe. I wiſh I had a maſk.

Lady *Lucy*. A maſk! that would be a ſtrange ſight, indeed in the country. No, no, only act up to your dreſs and character! You made ſo different an appearance in London, they will never recollect your features.

LADY LUCY.

Fine ladies with fair-painted faces in town,
One maſk with another may hide;
Tho' leſs would be known *ſome* complexions, ſo brown,
If laid both the vizors aſide.

But, dowdy-like dreſs'd and bedizen'd, your part
In aukward ſimplicity lies,
The *woman-of-faſhion*'s a creature of *art*,
And *nature* her ſureſt *diſguiſe*.

Mrs. *Town*. Enough! My hands are ſet, my eyes fixed; I have a bluſh at command. I'll bite the fingers of my cotton gloves, and be as very a hoyden as ever hopped round a may-pole.

Re-enter Sir John Manly *and* Wildman.

Manly. Well met, pretty maidens.——They're deviliſh handſome.

Wild. Fine girls, faith!——Can you tell us, fair damſel, [*Addreſſing himſelf to Mrs.* Townly.] where two honeſt fellows can get a lodging to-night. We have had the misfortune to——

Mrs. *Town*. Fortune! Sir, we don't tell fortunes, indeed. [*Affecting great aukwardneſs in ſpeech and manner.*

Lady *Lucy*. No, gentlemen, if you are fortune-hunters,

ters, you will find ſome of the ſiſterhood behind thoſe elms. We are no gypſies.

Manly. Gypſies, my dear! I proteſt I am aſtoniſhed to ſee ſo much beauty and elegance. Your habits are ruſtic, but they are perfectly genteel; and by your air and mien, you ſhould be fine ladies from St. James's.

Mrs. *Town.* [*very awkwardly.*] Yes, we have quite the St. James's air, indeed.

Wild. Thou haſt ſomething better, my little dear. Thoſe pretty pouting lips, thoſe ſparkling eyes, this yielding hand—— [*Laying hold of her hand.*

Mrs. *Town.* Nay, pray, Sir, be civil.——Come, couſin.

Wild. You would not, ſure, leave us in a ſtrange place, child.

Mrs. *Town.* Laud, Sir, we have nothing to do with you. As a couple of ſtrays, indeed, we might drive you to the head-borough.

Wild. And what then?

Mrs. *Town.* Why, then he would lodge you to-night in the pound; have you cried the three next market-days; and then, if no-body owned you—you would fall to the lady of the manor.

Wild. The lady of the manor!

Mrs. *Town.* Yes, Sir, for want of a lord.——May neither of you have worſe luck,—come, couſin.

Lady *Lucy.* [*Coming forward with* Man.] Ay, come let us go. [*To* Manly.] Pray, Sir, let go my hand.

Manly. Yes, child, if you'll let go my heart, otherwiſe, my dear, I ſhall not let you eſcape. Do you know the penalty of robbing a man thus, on the highway?

Lady *Lucy.* If you have loſt any thing, Sir, you know your remedy. It is as yet between ſun and ſun, you may ſue the county.

Manly. No, child, I ſhall detain the robber and bring her to juſtice.

Lady *Lucy.* Indeed, Sir, you won't, for I ſhall inſtantly go home:

Manly. Where do you live, then?

Lady

Lady *Lucy*. At yonder farm-houſe.

Manly. And who is the owner of it?

Lady *Lucy*. One Sternold, a ſurly old farmer, who, when he's pleaſed, vouchſafes to call me daughter.

Wild. [*To Mrs.* Townly.] And do you live there too, my dear?

Mrs. *Townly*. Yes, Sir, we live here two country couſins, fretting like ſilk and inkle, wove together in a piece.

Wild. How ſo?

Mrs. *Townly*. Oh, Sir, She's quite a ruſtic, and has none of the town poliſh, one gets, by going, as I do, to market. [*Curtſying with aukward affectation.*

Wild. [*Aſide.*] Arch and ſilly! A whimſical compound! [*Takes her aſide.*

Manly. [*To Lady* Lucy.] And is your father, really, a farmer?

Lady *Lucy*. A gentleman farmer, Sir; one that having when young ſquandered away his eſtate in London, took an averſion to the town, and has been conſtantly railing againſt it ever ſince.

Manly. Is he ſo moroſe a cynic, think you, as to refuſe us entertainment for a ſingle night?

Lady *Lucy*. Indeed I believe he is.

Manly. Surely not, if you intercede in our favour.

Lady *Lucy*. Perhaps not; but I am not ſatisfied of the propriety of that; I will however propoſe it to my father, and if he approves of it, you will be welcome. Come, couſin. [*Exeunt Lady* Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly.

Manly. What a pair of pretty ruſtics!

Wild. I never ſaw any thing more charming.

Manly. My girl is the moſt angelic creature.

Wild. Mine the moſt mortal-killing beauty.

Manly. Mine the prettieſt, wittieſt.———

Wild. Mine the neateſt, ſweeteſt———a little ſilly or ſo! But, no matter, the more ſimple, the more kind.

WILDMAN.

Give me the girl that's ripe for joy,
Who, not ſo wiſe as to be coy,
Is amorous, void of art.

MANLY.

MANLY.

Give me the lovely girl, who knows,
To prize the bleſſings, ſhe beſtows;
Whoſe head informs her heart.

WILDMAN.

Be thine, then, the joy wit and ſenſe may inſpire,
And mine the fond raptures that flow from deſire.

MANLY.

Though mine be the joy wit and ſenſe may inſpire,
Be mine too the raptures that flow from deſire.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE. *A Farm-Yard.*

Enter Sternold.

Sternold. I wiſh theſe young ladies were returned. It grows late, and ſhould any accident happen to them, they might pay dear for their frolick——Ha! they have been talking to two young ſparks. I ſee, there's ſomething more in the wind, than I ſuſpected.

Enter Lady Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly.

Lady *Lucy.* Oh, farmer Sternold! We have a favour, to beg of you. Can't you furniſh lodgings for thoſe two gentlemen yonder?

Stern. Why, ladies, if you will not let me into your whole project, I may commit ſome blunder; You know how apt I am to be rude to ſtrangers.

Lady *Lucy.* Well, well, you muſt treat them as ſuch, notwithſtanding —— for tho' we know them, they don't know us: but take us for what we ſeem. Oblige us, in giving them entertainment to-night and behave to them otherwiſe as you will. They are within hearing, ſo appear to them in character.

Stern. [*Aſide.*] Then I have my cue. [*Aloud.*] Ay, ſome Covent-Garden gentry, I ſuppoſe; that, having been fleeced at the bagnio and card-table, are come to recruit their finances on the highway. But here they can only rob the hen-rooſt. What a plague ſent them hither?

Lady

Lady *Lucy*. Bleſs us, Sir, how you talk! The gentlemen will hear you.

Stern. Hear me! Why, I would have them hear me. Where are they?

Lady *Lucy*. By yonder hedge-row, Sir—they have been waiting a good while.

Stern. Let them wait, with a murrain.

Lady *Lucy*. You will pleaſe, Sir, to ſay yes or no.

Stern. No, then, no! Burn my houſe and barns; let the diſtemper ſeize my cows, the rot my ſheep, the mildew my corn, and the blight my fruit; but let no London plagues come within my doors. What has bewitch'd you to aſk ſuch a queſtion!

Lady *Lucy*. They deſired it of us, in common humanity.

Mrs. *Town*. And 'twere a pity the poor gentlemen ſhould lie all night in the fields.

Stern. Gentlemen!—Why, ye ſimpletons, they are the bane and deſtruction of your ſex; worſe enemies to beauty than old age or the ſmall-pox——Gentle, indeed!

STERNOLD.

Not *Satan*, when a wily ſnake,
He tempted grandame *Eve*,
More ſubtle than the modern rake
Her daughters to deceive.

Like *her*, each curious female, ſtill,
The fruit forbidden eyes,
And longs to taſte both *good* and *ill*;
For *women* will be *wiſe*.

Like *him*, purſu'd the precious plan,
The devil himſelf had laid,
Doth cruel, cunning, *gentle* man
Seduce the ſilly maid.

Lady *Lucy*. But under your protection, Sir——

Stern. True daughters of the firſt woman! Well to oblige you, I'll talk to them. Tell them they may come this way.

Lady

Lady *Lucy*. We will, Sir.

Mrs. *Town*. See, Sir, they are almoſt here, and look like ſober, honeſt gentlemen: not as if they come from London! [*Ex. Lady* Lucy *and Mrs*. Townly.

Stern. Now, to *me*, they look like a deputation from the cuckold-makers of the corporation, in common-hall aſſembled.

Enter Sir John Manly *and* Young Wildman.

Manly. We are extremely ſorry, Sir ——

Wild. To give you this trouble ——

Manly. But, having loſt our way ——

Wild. And our carriage breaking down ——

Stern. Extremely ſorry! Yes, you look very ſorrowful, indeed. Loſt your way!—Now I rather think you are two ſorry fellows that are never out of your way—A pretty excuſe this, you have trumped up for an unſeaſonable viſit.

Manly. Sir, in a few plain words ——

Stern. Come, come, I'll tell you, in a few plain words, what honourable deſign you are bent upon. You clubbed your ſhallow wits together; your carriage was to break down; you were to be benighted; and taking the advantage of my humanity for entrance into my houſe, you were honeſtly to embrace that opportunity of ruining my family. Was it not ſo? Aſk your conſciences now, ha!

Manly. Our conſciences, Sir!

Stern. Our conſciences, Sir! Yes, your conſciences, Sir. What are you poſed? Have you no conſciences? Egad, like enough. Pray whence come you?

Manly. From London.

Stern. From London! I thought ſo: the mart of iniquity; the devil's chief reſidence. He picks up a vagabond ſinner now and then with us in the country; but he monopolizes with you in London.

Wild. You are very ſevere upon the town, Sir.

Stern. Yes, Sir. I know both ends of it.

Wild. Which are both greatly changed of late we aſſure you.

WILDMAN.

When you were a youngſter, 'tis known,
The *town* was as wicked as witty;
The laugh was at *court* all their own;
The old ſtanding jeſt, ſtill, the *city*.

But now, Sir, believe me, 'tis true,
Of both ends the practices tally;
A lord thus ſtock-jobs, like a jew,
And baits bulls and bears in the Alley.

In morals and manners the ſame,
For money or love when the trade is,
The *peer* plays the *citizen*'s game,
And the *peereſs* the gay *city-lady*'s.

Stern. Yes, yes, I hear London is mightily changed, indeed; and if it were grown as much *better* as it is *bigger*, ſomething might be ſaid for it. But the *head* is too big for the body, and the whole nation has got the rickets.

Manly. I find, Sir, you are an univerſal ſatiriſt. But, come, to the purpoſe, I ſee our ſervants and horſes are coming round. Is there no ſecurity you will take for a ſingle night?

Stern. There is; but it lies in my own hands, gentlemen, and if you dare abide by honeſt conditions—

Manly. We wiſh no other, Sir. They who intend no wrong fear none.

Stern. There lies your way, then, gentlemen. Enter and welcome. [*Exeunt.*

Re-enter Lady Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly.

Lady *Lucy.* He has taken them both in.

Mrs. *Townly.* As I live, ſo he has. Now, Lady Lucy, if the right man ſhould be dropped from the clouds; you will be as good as your word, and not let him ſlip through your fingers.

Lady *Lucy.* I proteſt my heart beats ſtrangely.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Townly*. Yes, child, it beats to arms, the town's beſieged, and the guard is called upon duty.

MRS. TOWNLY.

The *heart* of a *woman*'s the *fort*,
Where quickly the *garriſon* muſter,
And all her proud ſpirits reſort,
When man puts her into a fluſter

Yet, courage, my girl, never fear;
Diſcretion's an able defender,
That, be the foe ever ſo near,
Will make proper terms of ſurrender.

But here returns your gallant, to look for us, I'll leave you together.

Lady *Lucy*. Nay, but—— [*Laying hold of her.*

Enter Sir John Manly.

Manly. I am come, gentle maidens——

Mrs. *Townly*. Yes, Sir, we ſee you are. Good b'ye, couſin. [*Breaks from her and runs out.*

Manly. [*Stopping Lady* Lucy, *who is following her.*] Indeed, my pretty maid, I muſt not loſe this opportunity of talking a little *ſeriouſly* to you.

Lady *Lucy*. Bleſs me, Sir, What can you have ſeriouſly to ſay to me?

Manly. Say, child! Mere ſaying is too cold. Let me ſwear to thee.

Lady *Lucy*. Well, Sir; and what would you ſwear to me?

Manly. That I love you, paſſionately, fondly love you.

Lady *Lucy*. That you love me! Eh! And pray, Sir, how long may you have thus *paſſionately*, *fondly*, lov'd me!

Manly. From the firſt moment I beheld you.

Lady *Lucy*. About half an hour, or ſo!

Manly. Yes, my eyes caught inſtantly the infection, my head grew confus'd, my heart inflamed, my——

Lady

Lady *Lucy*. Poor gentleman! troubled with the amorous epilepſy! Is it uſual for you to fall in love, thus at firſt ſight! Or is this the firſt fit of the kind!

Manly. The firſt and laſt, be aſſured. The flame which now glows in my breaſt will burn for ever.

Lady *Lucy*. Not it, Sir. Be comforted. It was kindled too ſuddenly, and burns too violently, to laſt long.

LADY LUCY.

Love, by *reaſon* uncontroul'd,
Never long the ſame can hold,
'Tis a *fever* of the *mind*,
Of the *intermittent* kind;
Hot and cold.
Like an *ague*, hot and cold.

Now the wretch with fury burns,
Now his freezing fit returns;
Fickle as the breath he draws,
Now he *chills*, and now he *thaws*.
Hot and cold!
Love's an *ague*, hot and cold.

Manly. This child, is mere poetry. And poets, you know, will ſay any thing.

Lady *Lucy*, Come then, Sir, to converſe without a metaphor.

Manly. With all my heart. Then I declare, I think you a charming creature, and never ſaw a woman I liked ſo well in my life.

Lady *Lucy*. At the ſame time you, think yourſelf ſufficiently agreeable, I ſuppoſe.

Manly. Why, don't *you*?

Lady *Lucy*. To be ſure, you are not abſolutely frightful.

Manly. Nay, but you like me.

Lady *Lucy*. Don't be too confident of that. You may flatter yourſelf, as you do me.

Manly. Flattery, my dear, is the language of love.

It

It is impoſſible to ſay what we mean, when our meaning is beyond the power of words.

Lady *Lucy*. 'Tis time then to have done, Sir, if you cannot ſpeak to be underſtood.

Manly. Or if you won't underſtand me. To ſpeak plainly then, in what part of this rural habitation is your bed-chamber?

Lady *Lucy*. That's pretty plain, indeed.

Manly. Do you ſleep alone, child.

Lady *Lucy*. No, Sir, with my couſin Laura. But why are you ſo inquiſitive? My father ſleeps not far off.

Manly. No matter.

MANLY.

In the gentle *Laura's* ſtead,
Take me, fair one, to your bed;
To your arms I'll ſoftly creep,
When your *father's* faſt aſleep,
Tell me, charmer, which the way,
Leſt I, in the dark ſhould ſtray.

Lady *Lucy*. So then, it ſeems, you really aſſure yourſelf that, having ſighed, kiſſed my hand, ſaid a few fooliſh fine things, and impudently ſtared me in the face, I ſhall drop into your arms, as they ſay birds do into the mouth of the rattle ſnake, by faſcination.

Manly. Nay, my love, this is all raillery. Come, you ſhall live with me and command my fortune. I'll take you from this ſurly old man, and place you in your proper ſphere. Make me but happy to night.

[*Warmly*.

[*Laying hold of her hand, which ſhe coldly withdraws*.

Lady *Lucy*. And you will leave me miſerable to-morrow. I thank you for the mighty favours you would confer. But what would the world ſay?

Manly. The world! Child. I will ſet you above it. My whole eſtate, ſhall be devoted to your pleaſure, and my influence exerted to protect you from inſult.

Lady *Lucy*. No, Sir. Tho' you could place me beyond the reach of cenſure, you could not raiſe me above the

ſenſe

ſenſe of ſhame. You might protect me from the inſult of reproach, but could not ſhield me from the pangs of remorſe. I ſcorn your protection. [*Going.*

Manly. [*Laying hold of her hand.*] Nay, but ſtay.

LADY LUCY.

Such cruel protectors ye *men*,
Who ſeek ſimple maids to decoy,
As *butchers*, who guard in the pen
The lambs, they prefer to deſtroy.

MANLY.

Nay, *men* to fond *ſhepherds* compare,
Who watch o'er the hopes of the fold;
The favourite lamb of whoſe care,
To ſlaughter not to be ſold.

LADY LUCY.

Adieu, mean ſeducer, adieu!
I fly from the falſehood of art.

MANLY.

In vain; for I ſtill will purſue
The charmer poſſeſſing my heart.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

The curtain riſes, and diſcovers Sir John Manly, *Young* Wildman, Sternold, *Lady* Lucy, *Mrs.* Townly, *and others ſitting at a table.*

Stern. Ay, a ſong! But, let it be ſomething, in which we may all bear a part.

Manly. And let the burthen be rural hoſpitality.

Song for ſeveral voices.

With friendly ſmile, and ſocial glee,
Lo! *Rural-hoſpitality*,
With hearty welcome to the beſt,
Of ev'ry *Stranger* makes a *gueſt*.

In

In p'enty ſpreads her chearful board,
With what kind Nature's gifts afford;
So lib'ral, generous, frank and free
Is *Rural-hoſpitality*!

In heaven no ſooner heard her name,
Than *Jove* to earth a rambler came;
Philemon's gueſt, as well as we;
Hail, *Rural hoſpitality*!

[*They all riſe.* *Lady* Lucy, *Mrs.* Townly, *and the reſt, go out*]

Sir John Manly, Wildman and Sternold, *come forward.*

Stern. Ay, only lay aſide your town manners, gentlemen; and we ſhall agree well enough.

Manly. But what hath ſet you, farmer, ſo much againſt London?

Stern. The inſolence and impertinence of its inhabitants.——Prodigal as I was, I could not bear to be fleeced by a ſet of money-making ſharpers, who differed from coiners, c ippers, and cut-purſes only, in being greater criminals with greater ſecurity.—I could not endure the haughtineſs of ſcoundrel upſtarts; who, by taking advantage of the weakneſs, or adminiſtring to the wickedneſs of mankind, were enabled to aſſume the appearance of gentlemen, and lolled at eaſe in the carriages, which honeſter men were forced to drive.

Manly. Yet thus will it ever be, Sir; while men are men, and live in a ſtate of ſociety.

Stern. No, Sir, it is becauſe men are *not men*, that ſuch pitiful doings diſgrace ſociety.——It is becauſe ſo many mean animals are ever ready to bend the knee and crawl on *four* legs that a few others ſtand ſo erect and ſtrut about ſo inſolently on *two*. But I!——

STERNOLD.

I never could bear, in the train
Of ſycophants ſervile, to wait;
Or, meanly dependent, in vain
To dance at the heels of the *great*.

The ſpaniel, indeed, that will creep,
And kiſs, while they beat him, their hand
In time, on a wool-ſack may leap,
And ſit with the lords of the land.

But he that by merit would riſe,
Will find, to his coſt, when too late,
That *meanneſs*, not *merit*, they prize;
So *low* and ſo *little* the *great!*

Manly. I hope, farmer, your ſentiments have not infected your neighbourhood.——If they have, we are likely to meet with but an indifferent reception, from the old gentleman there on the top of the hill, whom we purpoſe to viſit.

Stern. Sir Wilful Wildman! O! no. He is ſtill fond of your men in power and place, your people of rank and quality, forſooth.

Manly. I thought him a worthy character, Sir.

Stern. He is ſo. Sir Wilful has many more good qualities than the fops he ſo fooliſhly admires.——

Manly. He has a niece, I think, the toaſt of the country!

Stern. She is, Sir, and very deſervedly; but you'll hardly have an opportunity of ſeeing her, unleſs you make ſome ſtay in theſe parts: ſhe is at preſent gone a viſiting ſomewhere, with a rantipole young widow of quality, that came down from London about a month ago. And when they will return to the manor, it ſeems, nobody knows but themſelves; and perhaps they neither.

Manly. That's unlucky.

Stern. Yes, Sir, ſhe would have been worth your ſeeing: ſhe has twenty thouſand pound in her pocket and will in all probability ſucceed to the whole eſtate of Sir Wilful.

Wild. Has the baronet no other relations, then? I thought he had a nephew.

Stern. *Yes*, he *has* a *nephew*, and a ſad rakehelly young dog, they ſay, he is. Sir Wilful never ſees him, and

will moſt likely cut him off with a ſhilling. At leaſt I would adviſe him to it.

Wild. [*Aſide.*] I'm much obliged to you for that, however.

Stern. He has been ſent abroad truly for improvement, and improved, it ſeems, he is returned.

Manly. In *virtu*, I ſuppoſe, eh!

Stern. Ay, if by *virtu* you mean all manner of vice. The devil, I think, poſſeſſes the fathers and guardians of this age to ſend over their ſons and wards to the continent. Luxury is a plant that thrives pretty well in the cold climate of our own iſland: there is no need of tranſplanting it into the hot-beds of France and Italy. But, come, gentlemen, walk into the other room. I'll juſt ſtep out and ſee your ſervants and cattle provided for, and return immediately. I ſee the girls are coming again this way; they will entertain you in the mean while. [*Exit.*

Lady Lucy, *and Mrs.* Townly, *croſſing the ſtage and curtſying as they paſs.*

Manly. [*To Lady* Lucy.] Whither away, my little charmer? [*Follows Lady* Lucy *out.*]

Wild. [*To Mrs.* Town.] No, no, child, you don't get off ſo eaſily.

[*Runs after Mrs.* Townly *and brings her back.*

Mrs. Town. [*Affecting a ſilly aukwardneſs as in a former Scene.*] Laud, Sir, what would you have! You men are the ſtrangeſt creatures.——

Wild. And, you, women, are the moſt provoking things! Whither were you going?

[*Offers to kiſs her, ſhe breaks from him.*

Mrs. Town. I ſhan't tell you indeed and ſo don't—follow me. [*Exit.*

Wild. That I will; for if that be not a challenge I'll never accept one.—— [*Exit.*

Re-enter Sir John Manly, *and Lady* Lucy.

Lady *Lucy.* Nay, Sir: No more of this, I beſeech you.—

you.——I have told you, my heart is not to be purchaſed.——

Manly. Not with mine, my dear? Come we'll make an exchange. I'll give you heart for heart.——

Lady *Lucy.* That was indeed the whole way, they ſay—Before money was in faſhion, they uſed to barter in kind.—

Manly. Let us then revive that honeſt cuſtom of the age of love and innocence.

Lady *Lucy.* But, have you a clear title to what you would diſpoſe of? Is not that heart of yours ſold or mortgaged already?

Manly. I was free as air till I beheld thoſe eyes.

Lady *Lucy.* And would yet ſo ſoon exchange your freedom for ſervitude.

Manly. If I might be your ſervant.

Lady *Lucy.* I am afraid you'll prove a worthleſs one.

Manly. Try me, and if you like me not, diſcharge me.

Lady *Lucy.* That may be dangerous; but come, inſtead of taking you for a ſervant, ſuppoſe I ſhould like you well enough to make you *maſter*.——Would you marry me?

Manly. Marry you! Why, that is—as—to be ſure—but,—

Lady *Lucy.* Ha! ha! ha! Confounded as I live! The man ſo very humble as to offer me *his* ſervice, is too haughty to accept of *mine*.

Manly. Not that, child.—Not at all.——Oh, no! But why need we marry? Why ſhould you give me the *command* who am ſo ready to *obey?*

Lady *Lucy.* It is enough, Sir. I am fully ſatisfied of the baſeneſs of your deſigns.——Take back the vain offer of your heart, and know that I ſcorn as much to yield to your diſhoneſt paſſion as you do to ſubmit to honourable love. [*Going.*

Manly. [*Detaining her.*] Nay, but ſtay.——You muſt ſtay.——Let me reflect a little.

Lady *Lucy.* Do, Sir. Think how ungrateful, how injurious your ſolicitations. You call yourſelf a gentleman, and pretend to be ruled by the laws of truth and

and honour; and yet you would betray the confidence repoſed in your veracity; you would defraud your honeſt hoſt of his greateſt treaſure, the innocence of his daughter; you would inhaſpitably murder my poor father; the man whoſe houſe you entered under a ſolemn engagement, that would to common robbers, under the like circumſtances, be ſacred and inviolable.

Manly. Thou haſt touched my ſoul. A conſcious pang ſhoots through my heart and covers me with ſhame.

Lady *Lucy.* I know the diſparity of our fortunes.—I know you fear your family and name ſhould ſuffer in the opinion of the world; but believe me, Sir, they ſuffer more in fact, when you attempt to ſeduce an honeſt mind from virtue.

Manly. I own it.—Can you forgive me? Your juſt reproof hath overcome my ſcruples. I will marry thee.

Lady *Lucy.* Nay but think ſeriouſly. Can you love me for life? A poor girl without a penny of portion. Take time to conſider of it.

LADY LUCY.

Think what your companions ſo gay,
And family friends in high life,
With inſolent ſcoffing will ſay,
If made humble *Flora* your wife.

Though virtue, in ſimple attire,
May pleaſing appear in the *clown*,
Great folks in the *country* admire
The merit, they ſpurn at, in *town*.

Manly. I *have thought* of it; and would marry you, were it practicable, immediately. No family can cenſure, no education improve, ſuch manners. I muſt not, cannot, will not, live without you. My whole ſoul is fixed, my wiſhes all center in you. Can you deny me? Give me your hand. Let me be yours for ever. My whole eſtate ſhall go to purchaſe your conſent, and that ſhall be your wedding portion.

Lady *Lucy*. Well, Sir, on that condition and with my father's conſent you may poſſibly obtain mine.

Manly. I'll ſeek him and obtain his inſtantly. But ſhall I then be ſure of yours!

Lady *Lucy*. Why that is---as---Bleſs me, here's ſomebody coming.

Manly. You promiſe then.

Lady *Lucy*. Promiſe! I don't know :—well—but then I do.

[Manly *leads Lady* Lucy *to the door and returns.*

Manly. Charming creature! Marry you! How can I reſiſt ſuch wit, beauty and virtue united?—But the world——How ſhall I withſtand the reproach of my acquaintance? I will renounce them. I can more eaſily ſuſtain the taunts of a thouſand fops and flirts of faſhion, then ſupport a ſingle reproof from my lovely, virtuous Flora.

MANLY.

Then give me, dear charmer, your hand,
The world's vain reproaches above,
My freedom I yield on demand;
The world were well loſt for your love.

Re-enter Wildman.

Wild. Well ſaid, heroic Anthony. But where's your Cleopatra my boy?

Manly. A Cleopatra only in beauty, George. You come in good time: I want your advice. Shall I marry this charming little ruſtic or not?

Wild. Mary her, why you are not in love with her, ſurely?

Manly. Faith, I believe I am—I have ſtrong ſymptoms of it. My heart flutters at the ſight of her. She is conſtantly in my thoughts. I could fight for her, die for her.

Wild. Poh! that a man might do for an hundred women, he never was in love with. To die for a woman, Manly, is a mere piece of gallantry. But to marry her, boy, is to live for her, a ſerious piece of buſineſs,

buſineſs, and perhaps with her too, which is——out of faſhion, egad, and that is worſe than being out of the world by half.

Manly. Yet that I could bear with Fiora,——fame, fortune, friendſhip, all put into the balance againſt her, appear light as a feather. My regard for her will be laſting as life.

Wild. Then you muſt die ſoon, Manly, take my word for it. However, if you have a mind to put your paſſion to a violent death, you will take the readieſt way. Marriage is as certain a remedy for love, as an incurable mortification is for all other diſorders.

Manly. Don't be ſo ſevere, George. Her charms will afford an eternal ſource of pleaſure.

Wild. I don't believe either in the immortality of her charms, or the eternity of your paſſion.

Manly. Look at her again, then, and be converted.

Wild. Convert thyſelf, my friend. To marry a woman merely for her beauty, is to enſlave your whole body for the gratification only of your eyes. But why need you marry her? Give her ſome gold, man, promiſe her more; cheapen her; purchaſe her; carry her off; as I will do the little lapwing, her couſin: What, the devil, ſhould you encumber yourſelf with the leaſe of a houſe for, when you may rent the beſt apartments in it, as long as you like, and leave it at pleaſure?

Manly. I don't believe that. Had you ſeen with what modeſt reluctance ſhe yielded even to a kiſs! Her maiden reſerve——

Wild. Modeſt reluctance! I like that truly! Maiden reſerve! Ha! ha! ha! Little artful gypſey!

YOUNG WILDMAN.

The cunning *country wench*, in *this*,
Like little, lofty, *London Miſs*,
So ſhily ſhuns a civil kiſs;
But boldly offer more——
Begin to rifle once her charms,
Her boſom beats with ſoft alarms,
And, kindly ſinking in your arms,
Her Feign'd averſion's o'er.

Manly. And yet I have tried every temptation to allure, every argument to perſuade; and neither my gifts nor my promiſes would avail me.

Wild. Poh! poh! you did not come up to her price, I ſuppoſe. That's all. I thought, Manly, you had known women better. Beſides, conſider, you are on the cruiſe after my couſin Lady Lucy, a twenty thouſand pounder! Will you be diverted from the chace of ſuch a noble prize, by ſuch a little ſmuggling cutter as this? If the free-hearted cock-boat will give herſelf away willingly, or take a reaſonable price for her cargo, well and good. But to purchaſe a pretty beggar at the expence of your whole eſtate, reputation and liberty! Zounds, man, are you mad? Come, Come, let us have no more of this, but go in and ſit down to old Cruſty's October.

Manly. It is in vain, I find, to talk of virtue to a libertine. Go in, yourſelf; I'll join you preſently. But, I muſt ſpeak a word or two with old Cruſty, as you call him, before we ſet into drinking.

[*Exeunt at oppoſite ſides of the ſtage.*

SCENE an Orchard with an Arbour at the bottom in front.

Mrs. Townly *comes forward out of the Arbour.*

MRS. TOWNLY,

Sure nature form'd man for a rover,
Weak women deſign'd to deceive!
His tale; though told over and over
To *Twenty*, they *all* would believe.

Nay, were time or chance to diſcover
The falſehood, ſo many muſt rue;
So ſoothing the voice of a lover,
To each he would ſeem to be true,

Enter Lady Lucy.

Lady *Lucy.* Well, couſin what have you done with your gentleman?

Mrs. *Town.* Nay, what have you done with yours?

Lady *Lucy.* Mine is grown the moſt civil, obſequious flatterer.

Mrs. *Town.* Mine continues the moſt impudent, rude

rude rogue. Do you know, that I could not get rid of him without promiſing to meet him here after ſupper. And yet he no ſooner left me than he fell deſperately in love with Cicely, the dairy-maid: and told the poor wench more lies, in five minutes, than ſhe ever heard at ſtatute, market or fair, in her whole life.

Lady *Lucy*. It would be a good deed to put the rake to ſome ſhame.

Mrs. *Town*. I intend it, if he be not ſhameleſs. I have therefore ordered Cicely to come hither and give him the meeting in my ſtead. I have alſo another ſcheme in my head, with the help of Farmer Sternhold, to puniſh his impudence more ſeverely, if he carries it any further.

Enter Cicely.

Mrs. *Town*. So, Cicely, you have made a conqueſt of the London gentleman it ſeems.

Cicely. Concourſe! Madam! Laud! I don't know what your ladyſhip means.

Mrs. *Town*. Madam! Ladyſhip! You know, child, you are not to call me Madam, but Miſtreſs Laura.

Cicely. True Madam Laura, I declare I did not know one word in ten the gentleman ſaid. But he hugged and ſqueezed me ſo, I am ſure I wiſhed 'un further.

Lady *Lucy*. He did not hurt you, ſure!

Cicely. Not to ſpeak of: I could have managed 'un well enough, had that been all. But as he was a gentleman, I was minded to let 'un alone a little. Yet he was ſo woundy ſkittiſh, had it been Robin or Richard, I would have ſlapped the face of o'un heartily.

CICELY.

At romps with Robin, Tom, or Dick,
One fearful is of danger,
And rates them for the wanton trick
One pardons in a ſtranger.

If ſuch rough clowns ſhould come too near,
We riſk the being undone:
But rude may be thoſe freedoms *here*,
Which civil are in *London*.

Lady Lucy. And yet you muſt not let even Londo-

ners be too familiar, Cicely; for tho' leſs rough, they are not leſs rude, and are the more dangerous as they are more inſinuating,

Cicely. Your Ladyſhip!

Lady *Lucy.* Again! your Ladyſhip! My name is Flora, you know.

Mrs. *Town.* Huſh! Huſh! Yonder goes our ſpark, ſauntering about to look for me, I ſuppoſe. You have your inſtructions, Cicely, ſo put your beſt foot foremoſt. We ſhall be at hand to aſſiſt you, if your gentleman grows rude upon encouragement.

[*Exeunt Lady* Lucy, *and* Mrs. Townly.

Cicely *alone.*

Cicely. I will, Madam, and as he is within ear-ſhot I'll at him firſt with a ſong.

CICELY.

What hopes can there be for poor *Cicely*,
That one who's a gentleman born,
In love will not cater more nicely,
And treat a plain milk-maid with ſcorn?

Can he who was e'er ſworn at *Highgate*,
The miſtreſs forſake for the maid;
When, ah! between her mien and my gait,
So ſtriking a diff'rence diſplay'd?

Can he, who knows a gem to prize,
And may its worth enjoy,
Reject, when both before his eyes,
A diamond for a toy?
What hopes can there be, then, for *Cicely*, &c.

Enter Wildman.

Wild. What in full ſong, my little canary bird! I have been looking here all about for you this half hour.

Cicely. For me or Mrs. Laura, Sir?

Wild. Laura! child. No for you. Did your young miſtreſs talk of coming, then.

Cicely. Yes, Sir. She ſent me to tell you ſhe ſhould not come.

Wild. Ha! ha! ha! I like that much. Who wanted her? I had rather have your company, my dear Cicely, by half. Why, do you know that I fell in love with you——

Cicely.

Cicely. At firſt ſight, mayhap.

Wild. Nay, before that, mayhap.

Cicely. What before you ſaw me at all, Sir! What for, pray?

Wild. For your ſinging, my little woodlark. As I liſtened to the ditties you carol'd, coming home from milking, Cupid let fly his darts ſo thick at me, that one came, *whiz*, into my right ear.

Cicely. And went, *whiz*, out of the left, I ſuppoſe.

Wild. No, faith, it lodged in my head, and in its way down to my heart, left, at my tongue's end, a little ſong, I once made on a name-ſake of yours, pat to our preſent purpoſe.

WILDMAN.

Love, my blindfold heart to wound,
Made not *ſightly* charms his choice;
But, more artful, arm'd with *ſound*,
Avail'd him of *Cecilia*'s voice.

Echo thus made *Pan*, of yore,
Amorous of the *vocal* wind.
Sing, ſweet *Cicely*, ſing no more,
Till Love be *deaf* as well as *blind*.

Unleſs, my ſweet Cicely, you ſing only for me, and then you may warble ſweet-jug all the live long night, like a nightingale.

Cicely. And will you lie ſo long awake to liſten to me?

Wild. That I will, my little Philomel. Do you think I had not rather liſten to you than gaze upon that moppet, your miſtreſs *Laura*?

Cicely. Moppet, Sir! Laud! Mrs. Laura is reckoned a monſtrous deal handſomer than me.

Wild. She! Mere curds and whey! No more to be compared to you than ſour butter milk is to ſweet cream, child. Beſides, the ſilly creature is half a fool, an idiot in compariſon of you.

Cicely. Silly! Oh! ho! ho! Why ſhe goes in theſe parts for a great wit. You are certainly joking with me now.

CICELY.

You terribly flatter, I'm ſorely afraid,
Poor *Cicely*, an ignorant, innocent maid;

More

More witty and pretty by half than myſelf,
My betters, ſo fair,
You well may compare
To fine China ware,
That ſtands in the cupboard or uppermoſt ſhelf;
While homelier *Ciſs*,
Like a plain earthen diſh,
Is coarſe and as clumſy as delf.

Wild. Wrong not your charms, my pretty little milk-ſkimmer. I ſwear you look, in that ſtraw hat and ſhort petticoat, like a queen of the fairies, come to take a dance on the green by moonlight.

WILDMAN.

Let me then to yonder bower,
Only but for half an hour,
With my fairy-queen retire.
There unſeen we'll toy and kiſs——
Why averſe my gentle *Ciſs?*
Zounds! ſhe ſets me all on fire.

[Wildman *endeavours to force* Cicely *towards the arbour, out of which* Lady Lucy *and* Mrs. Townly *burſt, laughing.*

Lady *Lucy*, and Mrs. *Town.* Ha! ha! ha! [*They advance, laughing, to the front of the ſtage, keeping* William *and* Cicely *ſhuffling and looking confus'd, ſtill between them.*]

Lady LUCY. [*Ironically to* Cicely.]
Gentle *fairy*
Of the *dairy*,
Who by moonright trip the green!

Mrs. TOWNLY.
With your lover,
Under cover,
Go and toy and kiſs unſeen.

Cicely. [*Pretending to be frightened*] Indeed and indeed Mrs. Flora; indeed and indeed, Mrs. Laura, I was not conſenting nor relenting. The wicked gentleman

fleman would force me into the arbour, in ſpite of my teeth.

Lady *Lucy*. [*Affecting anger.*] Mighty well, huſſey! Be ready to confront him then before your maſter to-morrow morning.

Mrs. *Town*. For neither of you ſhall ſleep in the houſe to-night, I can aſſure you.

Lady *Lucy*. A pretty gentleman, indeed! Prefer the maid to the miſtreſs!

Mrs. *Town*. A mighty pretty gentleman, truly! Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exeunt Lady* Lucy *and Mrs.* Townly, *laughing.*

Wild. What an unlucky dog am I! By beginning with the maid before I had done with the miſtreſs. I ſhall do nothing, I ſuppoſe, with either miſtreſs or maid.

CICELY. [*Affecting to cry.*]

Alack! muſt poor *Ciſs*,
For a trifle like this,
Be turn'd out to the wind and the weather?
Oh! ho! ho! ho! ho! [*Crying.*

WILDMAN.

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! [*Laughing.*
No, no, *Cicely*, no,
With me you ſhall go,
And we'll lodge in ſome hovel together.

Come, don't look ſo renetty, my cream-cheeſe curd. If you loſe your place on my account, I'll get you another. You ſhall live with me, and churn butter in a dairy of your own. But ſurely your young miſtreſſes will not be ſo cruel as to lock us out of doors!

Cicely. I don't know, Sir. They are very ſevere. I'll go and ſee, if you pleaſe.

Wild. And ſo make a ſeparate peace and leave me me out of the treaty! no, no, child. If I am to ſtay all night in the orchard, you certainly ſtay along with me.

Cicely. Laud! Sir, do you think I won't come back to you again?

Wild. Why, will you?

Cicely. For certain I will.

Wild.

Wild. Nay, then, they may do as they pleaſe. But you'll return ſoon.

Cicely. Don't be too impatient neither; my young miſtreſſes want a great deal of courting.

Wild. Egad, I think ſo; but make what haſte you can, child; the dew falls apace.

Cicely. Yonder is a dry hovel, Sir, where you may wait till I come back. But don't ramble into the yard, for fear of the maſtiffs.

Wild. Well thought of, my dear. I ſhall lie cloſe till you return, my dear dairy-maid. So I don't wiſh you good night. [*Exit.*

Cicely. And yet the poor gentleman might as well: for the nights are ſo ſhort, I ſhall hardly prevail to get him in doors till morning. But it is moonlight, and there is plenty of peaſe-ſtraw in the hovel.

CICELY.

The ſky ſo clear, the night ſo fine,
The watch-dogs bay the moon?
Then lie cloſe, London ſpark of mine,
For fear I come not ſoon.

Poor *Cicely* vows her heart it moves
To ſpeak her mind ſo free—
Then lie cloſe, thy dear dairy-maid
Can come no more to thee. [*Exit.*

SCENE the Farmer's Hall.

Enter Sir John Manly *and* Sternold.

Stern. Well, Sir; as I find your character and intentions are honourable, I am ſatisfied. I have no other objection to make than the general one againſt unequal and precipitate marriages. I could wiſh your affections had been of ſlower growth, to have taken deeper root. Beauty is like a rich but ſhallow ſoil. It is fertile; but I always ſuſpect its ſudden ſhoots come up too haſtily to be vigorous or laſting.

Sir *John.* Rather ſuſpect the languid affection of the mercenary tribe, who marry only for money.

Stern. Well, Sir, if you are ſo fully determined, I have nothing farther to ſay; except that, if you mean to be married this morning, (for you have kept us up

till

till paſt midnight) you muſt not have much ſleep, I can tell you. You muſt ride ſome miles, and that expeditiouſly too, to procure a licence and get tacked together within canonical hours.

Sir *John.* Sleep, Sir! I promiſe you, I ſhall not go to bed till I return. You will be ſo obliging as to let my ſervant and one of yours, get the horſes ready to attend us: my lovely Flora has promiſed ſhe would ſet out with me the moment I procured your permiſſion.

Stern. Adventurous girl! Well, go ſee after your miſtreſs, while I order the neceſſary preparations for your journey. Heav'n grant that your love prove as laſting as it ſeems to be ſincere Not but that a match made only for love is as likely to turn out happy as one made merely for money

Sir *John.* Ay, never fear, farmer. [*Exit* Stern.

Sir JOHN.

The paſſion doubt, when faintly gleams
From gold is borrow'd light:
The *moon* thus ſheds her watery beams,
Still *cold*, however *bright*.

True love is like the *ſun*, whoſe rays,
A genial warmth impart;
While beauty's warmer, brighter blaze
Inflames at once the heart.

SCENE *a Farm Yard.*

Enter Wildman.

Wild. Fairly jilted, by Jupiter! Here have I been waiting, like an aſs, the return of a ſkittiſh young filly, till it is broad day-light. By the noiſes that have continued all the while in the houſe, one would imagine this out-of-the-way old fellow kept his family up all night; or at leaſt that, like a ſhip's crew, they kept watch and watch about. If I am not revenged of the little devils for playing me this trick—Ha! here comes my arch little ſimpleton alone. An early riſer, 'faith. She may chance to get a fall before night.

Enter Mrs. Townly.

Ha! Miſs. Have I caught you? [*Lays hold of her.*

Mrs. *Town.* Sir, my uncle would ſpeak with you.

Wild.

Wild. Yes, child: and I would ſpeak with you too. What a pretty trick your country-couſins contrived to play me laſt night! Do you think I ſhall tamely put up with it?

Mrs. *Town.* Bleſs me, Sir! Have you been in the orchard all Night? [*Affecting aſtoniſhment.*

Wild. No: but I have been ſkulking in yonder hovel, all night.

Mrs. *Town.* What with Cis, the dairy-maid; I'll warrant!

Wild. No, all alone, I warrant. But come, child, you ſhall go and ſatisfy yourſelf.

Mrs. *Town.* Laud, Sir! What do you mean?

Wild. Mean, my dear! Nothing, but to let you ſee whether the bed be tumbled or not.

[Wildman *endeavours to force* Mrs. Townly *off the ſtage.*

Mrs. *Town.* Nay, then, help! help! Uncle! murder, help!

Enter Sternold *with two ſervants; who go up to* Wildman, *diſarm and ſeize him; while* Mrs. Townly *breaks from him and runs off.*

Stern. So, ſo. There, there; the game is ſafe. What, my honeſt gueſt, Mr. Wildman! Is it you that have ſtrolled out poaching abroad ſo early? You are really a very modeſt gentleman. What can you ſay for yourſelf now? Ha!

Wild. Say! Why I ſay that your kinſwoman here has been very uncivil to me.

Stern. And you would have been as much too civil to her! Ha! Is it not ſo? Come, come, bring him along. He ſhall have a ducking and a fair race for it. Our horſe-pond, Sir, is ſomething wide and not of the cleaneſt. If you can ſwim acroſs it, I believe you will not make a hunting ſeat of my farm again in haſte.

Wild. Sir, I am a gentleman, and expect to be uſed accordingly. Take off your two ruffians and let me ſpeak with you alone.

Stern. Well, Sir. I'll truſt you. I'll give you more credit than you deſerve. Do you hear? [*To the ſervants.*] Stay, without, that you may be ready within call. [*Exeunt ſervants.*

Now

Now, Sir, what have you to ſay in arreſt of judgment?

Wild. Sir, I ſay, that I have done nothing contrary to law.

Stern. Not contrary to law?

Wild. Not to common law; which is founded ſolely on cuſtom: and it has been the cuſtom, time out of mind, for us young fellows, whoſe blood flows briſkly through our veins, to uſe no ceremony with a wholeſome cherry-cheek'd country wench, wherever we have the opportunity of a barn, bed, hovel or haycock.

Stern. Mighty well! And ſo you confeſs you would have overpowered her, hah!

Wild. A little agreeable violence is abſolutely neceſſary on theſe occaſions. It ſaves a world of altercation and gives an edge to appetite.

Stern. And ſo having finiſhed this agreeable affair; that is, having diſhonoured yourſelf by doing the poor girl an irreparable injury, you could have reconciled your behaviour to your principles, and have ſat down perfectly ſatisfied with the probity of the action?

Wild. Faith, I believe I ſhould.

Stern. What can provoke you to ſuch injuſtice and barbarity?

Wild. Health and high ſpirits, my dear miſanthrope. Look you, old Wormwood, I have entered into a covenant with youth to make the moſt of time, I have ſeized faſt hold of his forelock, and won't let him give me the ſlip for a moment without ſome enjoyment.

WILDMAN.

Give me then life's largeſt cup;
Fill with pleaſure, fill it up;
Pleaſure, ſuch as love inſpires,
Melting joys and warm deſires;
Keep, Oh! keep it running o'er,
Till, grown old, I thirſt no more.

Stern. Hoity! Toity! What a diſſolute wretch have we got here!

Wild. Come, come, old boy, don't miſtake your ill-nature for virtue, or your cruſty humour for an antipathy to vice. Every cynic is not a philoſopher. Pr'ythee poliſh yourſelf, therefore, my dear rough diamond,

amond. You are the ſoureſt old fellow, I think, I ever met with. You invite a man into your houſe here, and then deny him the only tid-bit he has a mind to.

Stern. You know the conditions, Sir, on which you entered this houſe. But you have broken through every ſocial obligation, and yet imagine you are ſtill acting in the character of a gentleman.

Wild. Well ſaid, father grey beard! Egad I fancy you would make a good methodiſt preacher. But, as we are not likely to agree in our principles, with exchange of compliments on both ſides, let us take leave.

Stern. Stay, Sir. I muſt firſt have ſatisfaction for the inſult put upon my family.

Wild. Oh! with all my heart, old plough-ſhare. I underſtand you was born a gentleman. So your time, place and weapons in a few words.

Stern. Not mine, I aſſure you. I have lived long enough to be a little wiſer. But the young woman you have inſulted, has a lover; who lives in the neighbourhood, and has ſpirit enough to give you the meeting.

Wild. Gad ſo! Your bullies about you too! I did not ſuſpect that. However I'll meet him, Sir.

Stern. Expect him then, under the elms, in the meadow behind the farm, preciſely at noon. And alone Sir.

Wild. I will not fail, Sir.

Stern. You dare not, for fear of being poſted for a coward; a greater reproach to a modern fine gentleman than that of being ſtigmatized as a villain, or even a murderer.

Wild. You are right, old gentleman, there is nothing a man of ſpirit is ſo much afraid of, as that of being thought afraid of any thing.

YOUNG WILDMAN, *and* STERNOLD, *alternately.*

Right or wrong, true or falſe, good or bad be your cauſe,
Proud *honour* with nature at ſtrife,
O'er *juſtice* to triumph and laugh at the *laws*,
You have only to venture your life.

'Tis

'Tis the *mode*, and the world will be ſtill ſo polite,
Whatever the cauſe be of ſtrife.
To think, though you're wrong, that you're ſtill in the right,
If but boldly you venture your life.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE *a Meadow near the Farm-Houſe*

Enter Wildman.

Wild. A fine time of day for a cool thruſt, juſt in the heat of the ſun. Egad I have no appetite for it. I wiſh it was over. But where's my rival! I am before my time, I ſee. [*Looking at his watch.*] Ha! Manly.

Enter Sir John Manly.

Manly. George, what are you doing here?

Wild. Doing. I have been looking about the fields for you. Where the deuce have you been all this morning, that I could not get a ſight of you?

Manly. With my charming Flora, to be ſure. Where ſhould I have been?

Wild. Well, and you have brought her to reaſon at laſt, have you?

Manly. I hope ſo.

Wild. Ay, ay. I told you the way—Marry her, indeed a fine ſcheme!

Manly. True that's all over. I may go to bed to her now if I will, without aſking leave of the parſon.

Wild. If you will! And won't you? What the devil, have you more ſcruples than the girl?

Manly. Why, faith, ſhe is ſo innocent and credulous that I cannot bear the thoughts of impoſing on her ſimplicity.

Wild. Well then, marry her afterwards, if you like it. But I may ſafely truſt you for that; you are

too

too good a friend to population to encourage the inclosure of commons.

Manly This ſpot, however, is neither common nor waſte, George; and a little legal incloſure is a convenience to life, when the land has been carefully cultivated.

Wild. Yes, yes, it has been cultivated, I'll warrant it—But you cannot intend to marry the wench.

Manly Indeed I did intend it in the morning.

Wild What, to take the refuſe of a clod-hopper to your bed, and ſhare her favours perhaps with a plowman.

Manly Nay, no more of this, her virtues are equal to her beauty.

MANLY.

Though meaner far my *Flora*'s lot.
And I of princely line;
I'd take her from her humble cot,
Or make that cottage mine.

From *chance* derived, let *noble birth*,
Ideal honours claim;
In *virtue* there is *real* worth;
A *title*'s but *a name.*

Wild. Virtue! Ha, ha, ha. Yes, yes, it is a very virtuous family we have ſtumbled on here indeed. I ſuppoſe I am to be bullied into marrying the niece too, but——

Manly. Hold, Sir, I have hitherto borne your reflections with temper, but I muſt not indulge you farther.

Wild. Oh, Oh! You are ſerious! Are you? Well come, come, did it want a wife? It ſhall have a Dutch ginger bread one, gilt with Dutch gold too; not worth a ſtiver.

Manly. Pry'thee, George, don't make me angry with you in earneſt.

Wild. Why, what's the matter with you, man! Are you mad in earneſt? You are as fractious as if you were married already and had found your wife as wiſe as yourſelf.

Manly. To confeſs the truth then I am married.

Wild.

Wild. Married! How? When? Where? To whom?

Manly. This morning, to Flora. And now you know my ſituation. Tell me, as a friend, your opinion of what I have done.

Wild. Done! Pox, you have done a very ſilly thing; tied yourſelf to a waxen baby, a mere moppet, a prating, party-coloured paroquet, which you will play with like a child, till you are tired; and then, in a peeviſh fit, be ready to wring its neck off.

WILDMAN.

The whining girl or whimpering boy,
Papa's or mother's darling,
Obtaining thus a favourite toy,
By ſulking or by ſnarling;
A while he in it takes a pride,
So pleaſing is the gay thing!
But ſoon, the bauble thrown aſide,
He cries for ſome new play-thing.

Manly. Nay, if that be all, farewel. I ſee you are bent on railing at every thing. But, if you will come and dine with us at Sir Wilful's you may poſſibly be converted.

Wild. At my uncle's!

Manly. Yes, the Baronet intercepted us, in our return from church, and inſiſted on the celebration of our marriage at the manor houſe. You'll give us your company, George. [*Exit.*

Wild. Not I. You have ruined our project there. Beſides I have other buſineſs.—My antagoniſt is not very alert in keeping the farmer's appointment. Perhaps this is he coming acroſs the field.—No, this is a mere boy.—I ſuppoſe my hero has ſent ſome formal excuſe; the women have locked him up; the country is raiſed: or the juſtices have iſſued their warrant to ſtop hoſtile proceedings and make up the matter over a friendly bottle

Enter Mrs. Townly, *in Man's cloaths.*

Mrs. *Townly.* Your ſervant, Sir.

Wild. Yours, Sir. [*Aſide.*] Some young enſign of the militia, I ſuppoſe.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Townly.* I am ſent hither, Sir, to do juſtice to to an injured fair, whom I have the honour to be well with, and I ſuppoſe you are my man.

Wild. And do you think yourſelf man enough, young gentleman, to ſupport your pretenſions to her.

Mrs. *Townly.* Oh, Sir. I have brought a ſtouter man than you on his knees before now.

Wild. But what intereſt may you have in the wench to engage you thus in her affairs?

Mrs. *Townly.* Oh, Sir! I have been her favourite a good while; her chief fault indeed is being a little too fond of me.

MRS. TOWNLY.

I freely confeſs, Sir,
I dreſs and undreſs her;
Alone with her quite at my eaſe.
No mortal but I, Sir,
Her conſtant adviſer,
Can do with her juſt as I pleaſe.

'Tis not ſo gallant, to be ſure, to mention particulars of this nature, but the affair is no ſecret. I think this is the ſeventh challenge I have given or received, for her and her couſin, Flora. The ſeventh! No, the eighth. Four Juſtices, two exciſemen, a parſon, and yourſelf.

Wild. Flora! What you have had her too, hah?

Mrs. *Townly.* Excuſe me there, Sir, ſhe's married, it ſeems--Faith, I'm very glad on't---Poor man! Your friend, I mean. I hope he is not apt to be jealous.—If his ſon and heir ſhould ſtep into the world before the uſual time, he would do well to impute it rather to the forwardneſs of the boy, than to the frailty of his wife.

Wild. Thou art the moſt impudent braggard, I ever met with.

Mrs. *Townly.* 'Tis falſe, Sir! What becauſe I have reprieved you a little and ſuffered you to breathe a moment, while I diverted you with my gallantries, you grow inſolent.

Wild. Ha, ha, ha, thou art a very pot-gun charged with air.

Mrs.

Mrs. *Townly*. And thou, a wooden blunderbus without any charge at all.

Wild. Thou moſt inſignificant animal!

[Wildman *draws and advances towards Mrs.* Townly.

WILDMAN.

Come, come, draw your ſword, Sir,
Without more delay.

MRS. TOWNLY.

Not I, on my word, Sir,
I fight my own way.

[*Preſenting a large piſtol, on which* Wildman *ſtarts and retires.*

Nay, think not to fly,
Put up, or you drop,
With a flaſh and a pop,
Put inſtantly up, or you die.

Wild. Hah! What have you theſe tricks, my little bully?

Mrs *Townly*. As you make a longer lung than I, Sir, it may not be prudent to engage with you at ſmall ſword. But put up and take this, or this [*Preſenting two piſtols*. Wildman *puts up his ſword and takes one.*] You may charge it or recharge it, if you ſuſpect my honour.

Wild. How is it loaded?

Mrs. *Townly*. With a brace of bullets, Sir.

Enter Farmer Sternold.

Stern. [*To Mrs.* Townly.] Aha! What engaged already, my little friend! [*To* Wildman] I told you he was a lad of ſpirit, and would find you ſport. Keep your ground for he ſhoots flying to a miracle.

Wild. Does he? Egad, then I am glad you are come, farmer, for we were juſt going to be very ſerious here. This little huff-bluff Hector will let no body kiſs your family but himſelf, it ſeems. Pr'ythee, let us make up this affair, old gentleman. I own I don't fancy this flaſh and a pop, as your young friend calls it—If I am in the wrong; why—

Stern.

Stern. Oh, Sir, Nothing will ſatisfy him now, but your blood; depend on it.

Mrs. *Townly.* [*Traverſing the Stage with her Piſtol cock'd.*] No, Sir. Nothing but your blood! Nothing but your blood! Demme.

Wild. Well Sir, if nothing elſe will do——

Mrs. *Townly.* Come on—Let us retreat each five paces, then turn round on our heels, and give fire together. [*They meet, retire each five pace, and then turn round.* Wildman *fires, and Mrs.* Townly *falls as if ſhot.*]

Stern. Oh, he is ſhot! he is killed! my poor boy is murdered!

Wild. What have I done! Curſe on my ſteady hand.

Stern. Help, help, murder! Help.

Wild. Nay then it is time to provide for my own ſafety. [*Exit.*

Enter ſeveral Country Fellows.

All. What's the matter! What's the matter?

1ſt *Coun.* Codſo! here's murderation committed, I believe.

Stern. Run, fly, purſue the murderer, all of you. Yonder he ſcampers. I'll ſee to the young gentleman. [*Exeunt Countrymen.*

Mrs. *Townly.* [*cautiouſly riſing.*] Is the coaſt clear?

Stern. All off. Admirably performed, indeed. I was afraid you durſt not have ſtood fire.

Mrs. *Townly.* Yes, yes, as I knew there was not much danger. Bring him up to the mannor houſe when taken—I'll ſlip acroſs the fields and be there before you. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE an Apartment in the Manor-houſe.

Enter Sir Wilful Wildman *and Sir* John Manly.

Manly. Really, Sir Wilful, you give yourſelf too much trouble, I am obliged to you, but could wiſh to be excuſed.

Sir *Wil.* Excuſed! No, no. No excuſe; I will have no excuſe. What a bridegroom and afraid of a fiddle!

fiddle! A tenant's daughter married and not have a dance!

Manly. Well, Sir, if it muſt be ſo———

Sir *Wil.* And ſo it is that graceleſs young rogue, my nephew, you have brought with you into the country, eh?

Manly. Yes, Sir Wilful; and I could wiſh I might be the means of reſtoring him to your favour.

Sir *Wil.* Reſtore him, Sir!——He never loſt my favour. He never had it. He forfeited all pretenſions to that before he was born.

Manly. How Sir! Before he was born!

Sir *Wil.* My brother, you muſt know, mortally offended me by his extravagance; ſo that, though I conſented to be the boy's guardian, for the ſake of his mother, I ſhall never be reconciled to him on the account of his father.

Manly. That reſolve does not ſquare with your reported generoſity, Sir Wilful. The ſon may not inherit the foibles of his father.

Sir *Wil.* Yes, yes, prodigality runs in the blood as well as other faſhionable diſorders; he has made away with his whole patrimony already, and might ſtarve but for the annuity, I allow him out of regard to the honour of our family.

Manly. Young men, Sir Wilful, are apt to be too liberal. By keeping good company he has fallen into bad hands.

Sir *Wil.* Why give the rogue his due, he has kept good company, as you ſay. Who but George Wildman at Boodle's, the thatched houſe, the St. James's, and, and——every where elſe, egad, where he might ſpend, or loſe his money. To be ſure, he is the worſe for good company. And yet, if the young raſcal had my eſtate to-morrow, he'd run headlong into better, and ruin himſelf for ever.

Manly. It is unhappily too true, Sir. The firſt men in the kingdom are liable to be ſtript by ſharpers.

Sir *Wil.* Yes, but George is not ſharp enough to ſtrip me. He would be the firſt man in the kingdom, I know, to do it, but I ſhall be the laſt man to let him.

No, no, let him play at ſharps with thoſe that have taught him the game.

SIR WILFUL WILDMAN.

The youth of the age are ſo prodigal grown,
So profligate, thoughtleſs and idle;
That all my eſtate ſhould I lend him on loan,
At Newmarket races.
At Bath and ſuch places,
My money and lands would go after his own:
No, no, let him bite on the bridle.

Our *family manſion*, which *Time* ſtill regards,
In mould'ring would totter and ſidle;
Our *oaks*, that once ſhelter'd old *Druids* and *Bards*,
At *Almack's* and *Arthur's*,
Amongſt ſtars and garters,
To earth would be fell'd by a cut of the cards;
No, no, let him bite on the bridle.

Manly. But, Sir Wilful———

Sir *Wil.* No entreating, Sir John. It is only waſte of breath. It will be to no purpoſe. Here has been a pretty lady from London, this month paſt interceding for him. If ſhe can do any thing with him, well and good; otherwiſe I am inexorable. Not but that he ſhall have all when I die; I'll not give ſixpence out of the family——But not a farthing more than his allowance while I live. But I ſhall ſurvive the rogue; he'll certainly come to be hanged. I have heard ſuch things of him! he'll certainly come to be hanged.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. The coach is returned, Sir, with the ladies

Sir *Wil.* Godſo, ay, ſhew them up.

Manly. Ladies! Sir Wilful.

Sir *Wil.* Only a neighbour or two, juſt to make up a party for a country dance after dinner. [*Sir* Wilful *goes to the door, to introduce the Ladies.*

Manly. [*Aſide.*] This queer old Baronet is ſo troubleſome with his civility, I find I muſt go through the impertinence of a public wedding after all.

Enter

Enter Lady Lucy, *elegantly dreſſed.*

Sir *Wil.* [*Leading Lady* Lucy *forward.*] Sir John Manly.

Manly. So! I muſt ſalute them too, it ſeems. [*He goes to ſalute Lady* Lucy, *and ſtarts back.*] My love! my dear! Is it you? Why this change of dreſs? Wherefore thus metamorphoſed?

Lady *Lucy.* I hope my features are not alter'd with my clothes.

Manly. No, my love; but you can receive no addition by dreſs that will not injure the ſimplicity of your charms.

MANLY.

Can ſhreds of ſattin, ſilk or lace
By mode or taſte combin'd,
Beſtow one beauty on the face,
One virtue on the mind?

Then, *Flora*, wherefore ſtoop ſo low
To have recourſe to art?
Your charms require not dreſs nor ſhow,
To captivate the heart.

Sir *Wil.* All this is very true, Sir John. But hereby hangs a tale. It was formerly an odd cuſtom for the Lord of this Manor——

Manly. Why are not you he?

Sir *Wil.* Not I, Sir: no, no. The preſent Lord is a relation of mine by marriage. I thought you had known him; but you'll know him preſently.

Manly. Well, Sir; and what of him?

Sir *Wil.* Being a humoriſt and a man of pleaſure, he lately took it into his head to revive the obſolete cuſtom, I was going to tell you of; by promiſing a handſome marriage portion to a tenant's daughter, on condition of her indulging him in the privilege of a huſband on her wedding-night.

Manly. And ſhe has found a man, I ſuppoſe, that will marry her on ſuch conditions!

Sir *Wil.* Our peaſantry, Sir John, are few of them ſo nice as to let honour ſtand in the way of profit.

Manly. But what is all this to us, Sir!

Sir *Wil.* True, Sir John, that is as you take it; but the point is, your ſpouſe is the damſel, on whom my kinſman has promiſed to beſtow his bounty, and as he is ready to fulfil his part of the engagement, he thinks he has a right to inſiſt on the performance of covenants on the part of the bride.

Manly. Ha! ha! I ſee you are diſpoſed to be merry with me, Sir Wilful.

Sir *Wil.* Gadſo, but I am very ſerious, Sir John. The maiden, never dreaming it would be her lot to meet with a huſband, who ſhould object to the condition of the obligation, thought there was no harm in thus providing herſelf with ſomething to begin the world with. But, if you refuſe your conſent, to be ſure, the landlord muſt forego his claim.

Manly. Conſent! Confound his claim and his covenant too! I'll ſhoot him through the head, for having the inſolence to mention it.

Lady *Lucy.* And me through the heart at the ſame time, Sir?

Manly. Madam!

Lady *Lucy.* Since all muſt come out, Sir, it is in vain to deny that I love this landlord.

Manly. Love him! Sir Wilful's kinſman! the lord of the manor!

Lady *Lucy.* The ſame, Sir.

LADY LUCY.

Let *lord* and *huſband* have his due;
I yield to each his part;
For when I gave my *hand* to you,
I gave to *him* my *heart.*

While *your* commands I, then, obey,
And prove a loving *wife*;
O'er *him*, Oh! let me bear the ſway,
A *miſtreſs*, *low'd* for life.

Manly. Mighty loving, indeed! I thank you for your love, Madam.—But what can you ſee in me ſo abſurd as to attempt thus to impoſe upon me?

Lady *Lucy.* Take care you don't impoſe on yourſelf, Sir.

Manly.

Manly. 'Sdeath, Madam! who is this landlord?—Let me ſee him. What's his name? Where is he?

Lady *Lucy.* If you can command your paſſion, Sir, you may find yourſelf alone with him in the adjoining gallery, and be ſatisfied of his claim.

Manly. Yes, yes, Madam, he ſhall give me ſatisfaction, depend on it. [*Exit.*

Sir *Wil.* 'Egad, his blood circulates purely. What a confounded flurry he is in!

Lady *Lucy.* I begin to pity him, Sir; he ſuffers too much from an imaginary evil. Let us follow him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE, Another Apartment in the Manor-houſe.

Enter Sir John Manly *in great agitation.*

Manly. Confuſion! What can I make of all this? [*Looking anxiouſly about.*] I ſee nobody.

Enter Mrs. Townly, *in man's cloathes.*

Manly. Ah, ha! here he comes [*Aſide.*

Mrs. *Town.* [*Aſide.*] So far, ſo good. Now, if I can but ſteal undiſcovered to her dreſſing-room——

[*Walks on tip-toe acroſs the ſtage.*

Manly. [*Coming forward and ſtopping her.*] Yes, Sir; but you don't ſteal undiſcovered to her dreſſing-room, I aſſure you. 'Sdeath, Sir! how dare you have the impudence to think a gentleman would ſuffer ſuch an inſult? Draw this moment, or— [*Drawing his ſword.*

Mrs. *Town* Bleſs me, Sir! What's the matter?

Manly. You know very well what's the matter, Sir.

Mrs *Town* The deuce take me, if I do.

Manly. Come, come, draw, my little rampant lord landlord.

Mrs. *Town.* Landlord! The deuce a landlord am I, Sir. Not a manſion, hovel, or tenement have I in the whole county—Nay, Sir, I am only tenant at will to the cloaths on my back

Manly. It is in vain to trifle. You were ſneaking to her dreſſing-room. Draw, I ſay.

Mrs. *Town.* Not I, Sir, without ſome better reaſon.

Manly. Doſt thou talk of reaſon too, thou contemptible little animal?

Mrs.

Mrs. *Town.* Yes, faith, do I. And I think it very hard, for a man who has juſt fallen in one duel, to be taken up ſo ſoon by a ſecond.

Manly. Do you laugh at me, Sir? [*Advancing.*

Mrs. *Town.* Hold, hold, Sir! I tell you I have been ſhot once to day already. You would not go to kill me again.

Manly. Inſolent trifler!—Defend yourſelf this moment, or, by heavens——

[*Puts himſelf in a poſture of defence.*

Mrs. *Town.* Nay, then, it is well I ſecured my fire-arms. [*Aſide.*

MRS. TOWNLY.

The man is ſtark mad without doubt!
And *this* for my ſafety expedient——
[*Preſents a piſtol to* Manly, *who retires:*
To the right, if you pleaſe——Wheel about——
'Tis well, Sir—So--There---Your obedient.
[*Croſſes the ſtage, and Exit.*

Manet Manly, *with his ſword drawn, in great confuſion.*

Sir Wilful *and* Lady *Lucy enter at folding doors that open in the center of the ſcene.*

Sir *Wil.* Ha! ha! ha! What, fencing with the air, man? Fighting with your own ſhadow?

Manly. It is well, Sir, that your age and houſe protects you. As for you, Madam, I have learned to deſpiſe you, ſince I have ſeen the thing on which you had placed your affections.

Lady *Lucy.* What thing, Sir?

Manly. That toy of ſilk and tinſel, that went out juſt now. Bullies ſhould be made of more ſubſtantial ſtuff. But, thank Heaven, our marriage is not conſummated, nor ever ſhall. I'll ſue out a divorce, or ride poſt to Japan, but I'll get rid of this affair.

Sir *Wil.* [*to* Lady *Lucy*] Codſo! We ſhall carry this joke too far here: the man's brain is turned in good earneſt.---[*To* Manly.] Why, Sir John, there was nobody here but in your own imagination.

Manly. Away! thou egregious old coxcomb.

[*Putting up his ſword and going.*

LADY

LADY LUCY.

Oh, ſtay! Ah, turn, my only dear!
The ſportive trial's too ſevere;
It pains me thus to grieve you.
Leave not in rage your faithful bride,
But lay your fears and frowns aſide,
And let her undeceive you.

Manly. 'Sdeath, Madam! What do you mean?

Lady *Lucy.* I mean, Sir, that you yourſelf are the favourite landlord in queſtion. It is you who gave me the promiſe of your whole fortune for my wedding-portion.—It is you to whom I have given both my hand and heart.

Sir *Wil.* It is even ſo, Sir John. This is my niece Lucy, late Lady of the Manor; and you my new kinſman, who have entered, it ſeems, into a matrimonial contract to go to bed together. You ſee you have ſtumbled on a fortune without knowing it.

Lady *Lucy.* Yes, Sir; and I now give you my portion in poſſeſſion, in return for yours in promiſe.——This morning I was miſtreſs of this manſion, with all the paſtures and plowed fields within two miles round. At preſent they are yours: you are their owner now, lord of this manor and me.

Manly. Is it poſſible?

Sir *Wil.* Oh, yes, it is very poſſible that things ſhould be as they are. Well, Sir John, what ſay you now? Shall the marriage be conſummated or not? Shall the landlord have his due? or will you ſhoot him through the head? Sue out a divorce, or ride poſt to Japan, to get rid of this affair? Hah?

Manly. I am dumb with admiration.

Lady *Lucy.* I was reſolved, Sir, never to venture on a huſband, till I was convinced that my perſon, rather than my fortune, was his aim.—That proof you have generouſly given me; and I am rejoiced that I can make you this grateful return.——You muſt impute the artifices, I have uſed in procuring this aſſurance, to the deſign concerted between you and your friend, for the diſpoſal of both my perſon and fortune without my conſent.

Manly.

Manly. I own it; with bluſhes I own it. How ſhall I repay thy generoſity?——Give me thy hand, thy lips, thy heart; there let me dwell, and be for ever happy. [*Embraces her.*

Sir *Wil.* There, there; ſo, ſo. All's compos'd again. Egad, I was afraid your were non compos, when you talked of meeting a bully here.

Manly. By heavens, I encountered an inſolent boy, who with fire arms ſet me at defiance and retired.

Lady *Lucy.* Mrs. Townly, as I live, returning from her expedition againſt Mr. Wildman; who is in conſequence, you ſee, taken into cuſtody. You muſt join with us in inflicting a little imaginary puniſhment too on your friend.

Enter Wildman, *guarded by a* Conſtable *a d other country fellows: with Farmer* Sternold, *who goes up to Lady* Lucy *and converſes with her aſide.*

Conſt. [*To Sir Wilful.*] An pleaſe your worſhip, we have apprehended a vagron here, who has committed a murder, as I may ſay, in Farmer Sternold's cloſe. And ſo we have brought him to take his examination afore your worſhip, and be committed to gaol.

Sir *Wil.* Murder! ſay you? Whom has he murdered?

Conſt. Nea, nea, I did na ſee the dead man, to be ſure, to aſk'un. But the fellow and he, beliken, had ſome words about their ſweethearts, and ſo he ſhot'un, that's aw.

Manly [*To Wildman.*] I always told you, George, what theſe wild doings would bring you to; but you would ſtill run riot upon every thing. What could you expect?

Wild. Yes, faith, we have made a very fine expedition of it. One of us is married to a jilt, and the other will be hanged for killing her bully.

Sir *Wil.* A fair confeſſion. Where's John, clerk! Here, let him make out the fellow's mittimus. I'll diſpatch him to the county jail, in an inſtant.

Wild. To the county jail! Sir John, you will be bound for my appearance at the aſſizes.

Manly.

Manly. As to that, George, I muſt beg to be excuſed. I am ſorry for you, but murder is a ſerious affair, and the law muſt take it's courſe.

Sir *Wil.* Ay, certainly—Where's John, clerk! The vagrant ſtands committed.

Wild. Then, Sir, for the ſake of your family, I muſt be ſo free as to acquaint you who I am. Look at me, Sir, are my features unknown to you?

Sir *Wil.* Gadſo! Where's my ſpectacles! Let me ſee—Ay, ſure enough, the very fellow that I committed to Lincoln jail for horſe-ſtealing! Egad, friend, if yours be a family phiz, it is a very unpromiſing one, I can aſſure you.

Wild. And yet, Sir, I am your nephew, George Wildman.

Wil. My nephew! you George Wildman!

Man. Tis too true, Sir Wilful, and I cannot help reflecting on the ſagacity of your late prediction. The young gentleman will certainly come to be hanged, as you ſaid.

Sir *Wil.* True, but I did not think I ſhould have the trouble of ſigning his mittimus.

Stern. With your worſhip's leave; as the culprit proves to be a kinſman of yours, and I am the only witneſs that can convict him; if he ſhould chuſe to ſupply the place of the poor girl's ſweetheart he has killed, and marry her, my evidence, you know, on that condition——

Wild. No, thou raſcally old pandar.

Sir *Wil.* Nay, no abuſe friend; you have your choice. It is a fair offer; the girl or the gallows.

Sir WILFUL.

Does the fooliſh fellow faulter?
Pr'ythee make no more delay;
Take the wench or take the halter,
Stand not ſhill-I, ſhall-I, pray.

STERNOLD. [*To Wildman.*]

While there's life, man, there is hope,
Take the wife and leave the rope.

LADY LUCY. [*To Manly.*

Scarce can I refrain from laughter.

MANLY.

MANLY. [*To Sternhold.*]
Mayn't the man be hang'd hereafter,
When to wife and husband too——

STERNHOLD.
The rope may prove a friend——

Sir WILFUL. That's true.

[*Enter* Mrs. Townly, *in man's clothes.*

Mrs. *Townly.* Hey day! What's the matter here!
All appear surpriz'd.

Wild. Ha! my little bully alive.

Mrs. *Townly.* My antagonist in custody! I expected as much. You may release him, gentlemen, as I am unhurt. My foot only slipped, and my friend, the farmer, here, took the alarm before I could recover myself.

Wild. Let me embrace you, my little bravo.

[*Runs to embrace* Mrs. Townly, *who retires.*

Mrs. *Town.* Nay no more rudeness, Sir, at your peril. My uncle Sternold is here to protect me. Don't you know his niece. Laura, Sir?

Wild. How! Laura!

Sir *Wil.* [*After conferring with Lady* Lucy, *aside.*] Very frolicksome truly all this! A pretty piece of work, you young folks have made of it here. But come, come, it is my turn to have a frolick now. Look you here Mr. Scapegrace, I dare say, tho' Mrs. Laura did not chuse to be a Mistress, she will have no objections to be made a wife.

Mrs. *Townly.* Sir Wilful.

Sir *Wil.* Silence, hussy.

Mrs. *Townly.* But, Sir Wilful!

Wild. How, Sir! a farmer's daughter!

Sir *Wil.* Ay, sirrah, or you shall inherit no farm lands of mine. A farmer's *daughter*, booby! Why every woman is somebody's daughter. But your'e out, you rogue, this is Mrs. Townly, Sir, a London lady of family and fortune.

Wild. Mrs. Townly! Nay then I am caught in a snare. I thought I had escaped. Folly, I see, makes

one

one as blind as love; I ſhould elſe have ſooner recollected thoſe features I have ſo often admired. May I hope, Madam—— [*To Mrs. Townly.*

Mrs. *Townly.* Nay don't talk to me about your hopes, I know nothing of the matter. Sir Wilful ſeems to diſpoſe of us all as his property; but—

Sir *Wil.* But what, huſſy? Come take her hand. boy, take her hand. If you can venture for once on a wife. I warrant ſhe'll venture twice on a huſband.

[*Wildman takes Mrs. Townly's hand and eagerly kiſſes.*

Mrs. *Townly.* Hold, hold, Sir; no more. Sir Wilful ſeems poſitive, but——

Sir *Wil.* Again! at your buſs?

Lady *Lucy.* Nay, couſin, pay ſome regard, for my ſake, to the haſty example before you.

Sir *Wil.* Which if they don't follow, adod, I'll make ſuch an example of them——

Manly. Never fear, Sir Wilful. I'll be bound for my friend's appearance at the aſſizes now. At the ſame time, take notice, George, that however you, libertines, may affect to turn matrimony into ridicule, there is no laſting bliſs but in honourable love,

Sir *Wil.* Right, Sir John: And here I ſee are our neighbours and tenants aſſembled to wiſh you joy on the occaſion. Let them all come in——you muſt know it is our ſheepſhearing time, and we muſt make a general holiday of it.

MANLY.

False and flattering is the kiſs
Of the fickle faithleſs miſs.

LUCY.

True and faithfully for life,
Loves a chaſte endearing *wife.*

Mrs. TOWNLY,

Marriage might indeed have joys
Youth ſo true to beauty.

WILDMAN.

Laughing girls and blooming boys
Bleſſing love aud duty.

STERNOLD.

STERNOLD.

Joy, then, to the wedded pair
Joy unmix'd with *sorrow*

Sir WILFUL.

Hold you there---an hour
Muſt bid an heir good-morrow.

CHORUS.

Joy then, to the wedded pair!
Joy, unmix'd with *sorrow*!
Till th e *birth-day* hour of *care*,
Bid girl or boy good-morrow-

THE END.